



## **Information Technology Department**

600 E Boulevard Ave., Dept 112 • Bismarck, ND 58505 • (701) 328-3190

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

As the Chief Information Officer for the State of North Dakota and the Chair of the Health Information Technology Advisory Committee, I express my strong support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan submitted to your office. The implementation funding North Dakota will receive upon your approval of the plans will help develop a statewide health information exchange.

The Health Information Exchange will facilitate the exchange of health information created by healthcare provider's electronic health records within the state and around the United States. By allowing doctors to easily access patient information, the HIE will help improve health quality and outcomes. The increase in electronic health records usage by medical facilities and the implementation of a health information exchange will help reduce medical errors and duplicative services, improve patient safety, care coordination, and control the overall cost of healthcare.

The collaborative approach and stakeholder commitment and broad based involvement has created a great partnership for the development and implementation of the health information exchange. We look forward to the challenges and successes of this endeavor and the continued partnership with our stakeholders, including the Office of the National Coordinator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lisa Feldner".

Lisa Feldner, CIO  
State of North Dakota  
HITAC





**Executive Office**

(701) 328-1814  
Fax (701) 328-1545  
Toll Free 1-800-472-2622  
ND Relay TTY 1-800-366-6888

John Hoeven, Governor  
Carol K. Olson, Executive Director

September 22, 2010

David Blumenthal, MD, MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal,

The North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) would like to express its support for the ND Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plans.

Through the department's Director of Information Technology Services and the State Medicaid Health Information Technology Coordinator, who are members of the North Dakota Health Information Technology Advisory Committee, we have participated fully in the activities leading up to the creation of these plans.

DHS believes that creating a health information exchange will benefit the clients served by the department's medical and human services programs and assist the providers who care for these clients. Our hope would be that quality of care could be improved, efficiencies increased and cost reduced.

DHS expects to continue to support collaboration among the department's information technology services and staff; the Medicaid program and its health information technology activities and the State Health Information Technology office and officer. We also expect to support the activities of the Health Information Exchange through the Medicaid Electronic Health Record Provider Incentive Payment Program and activities outlined in the State Medicaid Health Information Technology Plan and Implementation Advanced Planning Document, due to be submitted shortly.

We believe that assisting providers to implement electronic health records and electronic exchange of health information, as well as achieving meaningful use, ultimately benefits all of the citizens of North Dakota, allowing them to access quality health care anywhere, any time.

Sincerely,

Carol K. Olson  
Executive Director

Maggie D. Anderson  
Director, Medical Services (Medicaid)



September 21, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

As an administrator of a small integrated healthcare system consisting of a critical access hospital, a skilled nursing facility, assisted living, a rural health clinic and a wellness center I wholeheartedly support the initiatives being outlined in the North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan.

It is empirically documented that the present uncoordinated care afforded patients results in duplication of tests and procedures which in turn brings about increased cost of care and unanticipated negative outcomes. North Dakota healthcare facilities are investing hundreds if not millions of dollars to bring electronic health record capability to our hospitals. The state Health Information Exchange will afford us the ability of sharing that data which is housed locally with providers on a statewide and national level. Without the ultimate implementation of the North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan individual facilities such as mine will not have the financial or technical capacity of connecting to health information networks.

Recognizing the benefits to this healthcare system and the patients we service, our facility is prepared to contribute to the ongoing operations support needed to sustain the Health Information Exchange.

Sincerely,

Daniel Kelly  
Chief Executive Officer



**LINTON HOSPITAL**

518 N Broadway – PO Box 850  
Linton, ND 58552

Phone: 701-254-4511

Fax: 701-254-0112

September 22, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

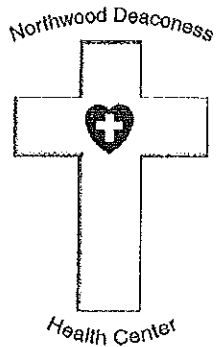
Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

The Linton Hospital & associated clinics has been involved with the planning and fully supports the Health Information Exchange (HIE) for North Dakota. The project not only improves the level of care for patients it also will help reduce duplication of diagnostic procedures. As a prior director with the state health department and now a hospital administrator and a board member for the North Dakota Hospital Association I have had the opportunity to work with the transition to electronic medical records for several years. I am looking forward to full implementation in the near future.

The implementation of a state wide health information exchange will provide an improved continuity of care, decrease errors and increase efficiencies at a local level as well as a state wide level. When electronic medical records are fully implemented there will also be a considerable lowering of costs for healthcare. It is important that the plan be implemented at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely,

Roger R. Unger  
Administrator  
Linton Hosital



Northwood Deaconess Health Center  
4 N. Park St. / P.O. Box 190  
Northwood, ND 58267  
(701) 587-6060  
[www.ndhc.net](http://www.ndhc.net)

September 22, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

The purpose of this letter is to support the North Dakota Health Information Exchange strategic and operational plan. The committee has brought in stakeholders representing a broad range of constituents from the state. They have spent hundreds if not thousands of hours in development of a plan. The group understands the tremendous potential offered. They have been relentless in their pursuit of their quest. This has resulted in a collaborative approach to plan development and has allowed for the greatest amount of input possible.

When one attempts to quantify the benefits, there are so many areas to highlight. Let me just mention a couple. North Dakota is well positioned to benefit from this plan. Though large geographically, health care providers are well connected with each other. They regularly demonstrate an uncanny ability to come up with workable solutions that meets the need of not only the providers, but the patients they serve.

The organization I represent is involved with two associations that demonstrate very well how this works. We are a member of a 5 hospital information technology network. They share I.T. resources in a remote data center located not at any one of these hospitals, but rather at a tertiary care facility. We are also a member of the ND Rural Health Association. Its purpose is to involve a broad spectrum of organizations that provide health services in rural communities. Whether they are a pharmacy, a clinic, a county health department, a hospital, AARP, EMS, or even more, they are welcomed as members of this association. I have no doubt that adoption and funding of this plan will continue to show this same collaborative effort put forward in carrying out the plan.

The HIE will help to reduce duplication of tests and procedures. The state is largely a rural state with a majority of hospitals and clinics in communities under 5,000. Their role is largely to provide primary care. Every rural hospital connects with one or more urban hospital, populations exceeding 40,000. An exchange will support the movement of patient information vital to continuity of care, from primary care to tertiary care centers, and then back to the primary care center.

Sincerely,

Pete Antonson, CEO, Northwood Deaconess Health Center  
President, North Dakota Rural Health Association  
Chair, Dakota Plains Health Information Alliance

Working together into the next Century!



# Lake Region

## STATE COLLEGE

1801 College Drive North, Devils Lake ND 58301-1598

(701) 662-1600 • fax (701) 662-1570 • 1-800-443-1313  
TDD (701) 662-1572 • [www.lfsc.nodak.edu](http://www.lfsc.nodak.edu)

September 22, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

I write this letter, on behalf of the Health Information Technology Department at Lake Region State College, to express our strong support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan to establish a statewide HIE in North Dakota.

Lake Region State College has developed its Health Information Technology program through a grant funded by the Office of the National Coordinator (ARRA Award #90CC0077/01). Our mission is to train a skilled workforce to meet the needs of providers as they make the transition from paper to Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and strive to meet the criteria of Meaningful Use.

Just as our Health IT program plays an important role by training our North Dakota workforce to successfully implement, support and maintain these EHR systems; a statewide Health Information Exchange for North Dakota will be critical to achieving improvements in the continuity of care, increased efficiencies, improved patient outcomes, among other benefits for our citizens.

Lake Region State College continues to work collaboratively with the State HIE Director, Sheldon Wolf, and members of the North Dakota Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) to move North Dakota to the forefront of EHR implementation through development of both our Health IT program and a statewide Health Information Exchange.

We remain strongly committed to supporting ND HIE and the Strategic and Operational Plan.

Sincerely,

Cindy M. Brown, M.Ed.  
Health IT Program Manager  
Lake Region State College



*Ashley Medical Center*

612 Center Avenue No.  
P.O. Box 450  
Ashley, ND 58413-0450  
(701) 288-3433

September 22, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20210

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

The staff of the Ashley Medical Center (AMC) support the North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan.

The Ashley Medical Center is a non-profit, community owned corporation serving the people in the lower middle portion of the State of North Dakota. It is a 20 bed Critical Access Hospital, with an attached 44 bed skilled nursing home facility. We also have two clinics, home health, hospice and 37 apartments.

Because we are in a frontier area and have limited funds, grants and programs, such as the North Dakota Health Information Exchange, are vitally important to us. Without the assistance of grants and outside funding, small, rural facilities would find it impossible to install and maintain a HIE system.

The HIE will ensure that our patients and clients receive the same opportunities for Health Information sharing that their constituents in the larger facilities have access to. This will improve the capacity for continuity of care, the sharing of vital information, and the decreasing of duplicate tests for the patient. This will mean a cost savings for the patient, and ultimately for the health system.

Although AMC is a small facility, we were able to become involved with the developing of the plan through the BTWAN and internet capabilities. We look forward to the advancement that this grant will mean for the rural areas of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hoeft  
Adm/CEO

TTY (800) 366-6889

"AMC is an equal opportunity provider and employer"

September 23, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

On behalf of Sanford Health, I am writing to express our strong support for the North Dakota Health Information Technology Advisory Committee's Strategic and Operational Plan to establish statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE) in North Dakota. It is our belief that statewide coordination of HIE implementation in North Dakota is vitally important in order to facilitate state participation in nationwide health information exchange.

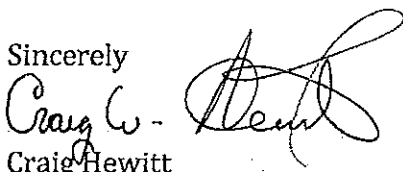
The implementation of a statewide health information exchange in North Dakota will be of great value to business and individual residents of North Dakota by improving health care quality and outcomes. Additionally, the HIE is a crucial step in ensuring a reduction in medical errors and duplicative services, improve patient safety and care coordination, and control the overall cost of health care.

Implementation of HIE will also drive innovation in the health care marketplace and be an important source of new jobs in the health care sector. The multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach that North Dakota has embarked upon will generate market opportunities for health information technology.

We recognize that this effort is essential to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records so that North Dakota can meet the federal goal to make all health records electronic by 2014. To that end, we are committed to ongoing participation in the implementation of a statewide HIE.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the openness and collaboration the North Dakota State Health Information Technology Advisory Committee has provided in leading this endeavor. This truly is representative of the 'entire' state.

Sincerely



Craig Hewitt  
Sanford Health  
Senior Vice President, Chief Technology Officer





NORTH DAKOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200

OFFICE OF  
STATE HEALTH OFFICER  
701-328-2372  
fax 701-328-4727  
[www.health.state.nd.us](http://www.health.state.nd.us)

September 23, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D., MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange (NDHIE) Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

The North Dakota Department of Health would like to share its strong support for the NDHIE strategic and operational plan that was recently finalized by the state's advisory committee.

The plan and its initiatives will offer my department many opportunities to increase the quality of care to the citizens in our state by reducing the opportunity for over immunizing our children, by increasing the efficiencies in our microbiology laboratory reporting and by reducing the amount of double data entry occurring in our department and with our partners.

The collaborative approach the committee used to develop this plan represents a true statewide assessment of our current infrastructure and lays the groundwork for where we need to go. Our department has received funding to allow for the accelerated implementation of HL7 messaging for our immunization registry and its partner community. We continue to pursue various other grants in our ongoing effort to support HIT/HIE implementation in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry L. Dwelle".

Terry L. Dwelle, M.D., MPHTM, CPH  
State Health Officer



# St. Andrew's Health Center

*SMP Health System*

316 Ohmer St.  
Bottineau, ND 58318  
Phone: (701) 228-9300  
Fax: (701) 228-9384  
[www.standrewshealth.com](http://www.standrewshealth.com)

September 23, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

I am writing on behalf of the State of North Dakota HIE group. We are supportive of the State plan and have had the opportunity for input and participation with the group through out the process. We are excited about the opportunities of building an electronic medical record (EMR).

The benefits that the HIE plan brings are many. Listed below are a few that we believe will improve the opportunities for St. Andrews and the patients that we provide services to:

- Continuity of care
- Communication and increased efficiencies
- Improved quality of care
- Reduction in errors
- Medication reconciliation
- Collaboration
- Reduction in duplicate procedures and tests
- Lower Costs

As I have mentioned above; we have had the opportunity to participate in meetings. The HIE group has been receptive to our comments and listened to what we had to say. With this group lead effort, we have the opportunity to share information about the process and many resources to contact as we work toward the electronic build within our system.

Having the State and team collaboration will allow us to move forward at a much quicker pace with our EMR build. We are invested as a health care facility to play a role with the HIE group as well as ourselves to ensuring that we have a fully implemented EMR

Sincerely

Jodi Atkinson  
President/CEO



# NORTH DAKOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL  
600 EAST BOULEVARD  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Representative Richard Holman  
District 20  
622 153rd Avenue NE  
Mayville, ND 58257-9000  
Residence: 701-788-2081  
Cell: 701-238-1124  
[rhoman@nd.gov](mailto:rhoman@nd.gov)

COMMITTEES:  
Human Services  
Agriculture

September 24, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

As a member of the North Dakota Legislature serving on the House Human Services Committee the implementation of the Health Information Technology system for North Dakota is of utmost importance. I fully support the plan presented. The district that I represent is entirely rural consisting of all or part of four counties and twenty-two small towns. The health care facilities in our area are connected to the larger systems in Fargo and Grand Forks North Dakota.

Because of the travel distance to the larger facilities with specialized care, primary care will most often occur in a small town clinic or hospital. What this means is that a connection from the general practitioner to a specialized practitioner is of utmost importance. With a state of the art electronic connection to specialized care the local clinic or hospital may be able to provide treatment without transfer, thus saving time and money. In any case quick, efficient access to a specialist will most surely improve outcomes of the care provided.

Electronic transfer of information also saves time, and decreases errors in the transfer of information allowing for greater speed and efficiency. I have personal experience of records being sent to the wrong location when the old method of courier was used.

The development of this plan has included a wide range of stakeholders who have provided input and information to see that the plan proposed fits the unique needs of our state. With the adoption of this plan for North Dakota the delivery of health care will be greatly improved. I fully support this plan.

Sincerely yours,

Representative Rick Holman  
North Dakota District 20



North Dakota Hospital Association

**Vision**

*The North Dakota Hospital Association will take an active leadership role in major Healthcare issues.*

**Mission**

*The North Dakota Hospital Association exists to advance the health status of persons served by the membership.*

September 24, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

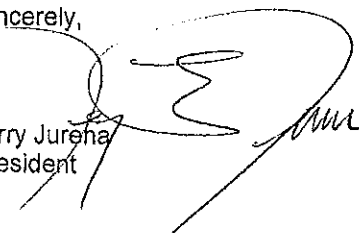
On behalf of the North Dakota Hospital Association, I am writing in support of the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan to establish a statewide health information exchange in North Dakota.

The efforts of the HIE will be of great value to North Dakota by improving health care quality and outcomes. The HIE will also allow hospitals to easily access patient information which will lead to better healthcare coordination and help control the overall cost of healthcare.

We recognize that this effort is essential to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records so that North Dakota can meet the federal goal to make all health records electronic by 2014. To the end, we are committed to ongoing participation in the implementation of a statewide HIE. The statewide nature of this initiative, and its collaborative approach and commitment to broad-based stakeholder involvement, constitutes an excellent strategy for ensuring that public and private interest can efficiently partner to develop and implement the statewide HIE.

Again, I would like to express my support for the North Dakota HIE Strategic and Operation Plan. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact me at 701-224-9732.

Sincerely,

  
Jerry Jureha  
President

South Dakota

1400 West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105-1570

phone: (605) 357-1515  
fax: (605) 357-1510

# CHAD

Community HealthCare  
Association of the Dakotas

North Dakota

1003 East Interstate Avenue, Suite 6  
Bismarck, ND 58503

phone: (701) 221-9824  
fax: (701) 221-0615

September 24, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

The purpose of this letter is to express the Community HealthCare Association of the Dakota's (CHAD) strong commitment for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (ND HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan.

As a State Primary Care Association representing the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) supported Community Health Centers in North Dakota and South Dakota, CHAD is excited about the expected benefits the ND HIE will bring to our member health centers. CHAD is a HRSA Office of Health Information Technology (OHIT) supported Health Center Controlled Network providing group strategies for implementation and management of electronic health records across the Health Centers. The CHAD Network is excited to support the strategic and operational plan of the North Dakota HIE.

From its beginnings in 2006, the ND HIE has worked diligently to meet the highest standards in participation, openness, transparency, and stakeholder involvement. In addition, the ND HIE has fostered innovation while leveraging existing HIT initiatives and resources for the benefit of all of the residents of North Dakota. CHAD anticipates that the implementation of the ND HIE strategic plan will bring continuity of care, decreased errors, and increased efficiencies, ultimately generating improved quality of care for all patients.

We are excited that the Department of Health and Human Services is championing Health Information Exchange. We look forward to working closely with the ND HIE and their North Dakota Partners. Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support of their proposal.

Sincerely,



Scot Graff, Chief Executive Officer



[www.communityhealthcare.net](http://www.communityhealthcare.net)



## **First Care Health Center**

115 Vivian Street / PO Box I  
Park River, ND 58270  
(701) 284-4538 Fax (701) 284-4605  
[stald@polarcomm.com](mailto:stald@polarcomm.com)

*Administration*  
September 24, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

I am writing in support of the North Dakota Health Information Exchange plan and the need it has to acquire more funding for Health Information technology. The HIE in North Dakota will allow facilities such as ours to exchange Health Information with our larger tertiary centers in North Dakota and eventually beyond.

Our facility has been working diligently since 2007 to implement an Electronic Medical Record as we are convinced that will lead to better care for our patients. A couple of years ago, we had an elderly nursing home resident in our emergency room on a Saturday morning during a ND snowstorm. The ability to have had an exchange of patient information including the x-ray would have saved not only the patient a trip in the ambulance but also the crew that had to drive this person about 60 miles during the storm only to have the patient told that there was nothing that could be done. The HIE in North Dakota will facilitate the exchange of information in many other cases; some more dramatic than this case; some less. The value will be evidenced in better quality of care; greater access to care; as well as reduction in duplication which ultimately results in cost savings.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the ND HIE.

Sincerely,

Louise Dryburgh, CEO



Shelly E. Peterson, President • email: shelly@ndltca.org

September 25, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

The North Dakota Long Term Care Association is pleased to support the North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan.

The overall goal of the health information exchange strategic and operational plan aligns with our organization. NDLTCA's vision statement says, "The North Dakota Long Term Care Association is recognized as an innovative leader in the continuum of care which has a positive impact on the quality of life of those we serve." We believe there will be a positive impact on the quality of life for those residents/tenants we serve by long term care utilizing the health information exchange. The HIE will assist in ensuring our residents/tenants safety, the efficiency of health care delivery, improving the quality of resident/tenant care, reducing the costs of service delivery and increase consumer satisfaction in North Dakota.

We look forward to participating in collaborative efforts by providing educated resources and assistance to meet the needs identified in the planning and implementation processes of this project.

The NDLTCA is a nonprofit trade association representing long term care facilities in North Dakota. Member facilities include assisted living, basic care and nursing facilities. As a member of the advisory committee we commit to working aggressively to bring the long term care community into the adoption and use of health information exchange.

Sincerely,

Shelly Peterson  
President

SEP/pjt

(701) 222.0660 • fax: (701) 223.0977 • 1900 North 11th Street, Bismarck, ND 58501 • Web site: [www.ndltca.org](http://www.ndltca.org)

An affiliate of the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living



September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

On behalf of the Key Health Alliance, which serves as the federally designated HIT Regional Extension Center for Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing to express our support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan to establish statewide HIE in North Dakota.

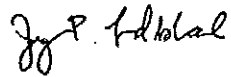
Our HIT REC program, called REACH (Regional Extension and Assistance Center for HIT) is a project of Key Health Alliance, whose partners include Stratis Health, National Rural Health Resource Center, and the College of St. Scholastica, working in close collaboration with North Dakota Health Care Review and the University of North Dakota, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Center for Rural Health. Our program assists primary care providers in North Dakota and Minnesota in the adoption, implementation and effective utilization of Electronic Health Records (EHR). A strong HIE network able to share patient information state-wide is vital to driving EHR usage in North Dakota. We are committed to ensuring all priority health care providers in North Dakota can achieve meaningful use and that the interoperability exists to ensure that critical health information can be shared effectively. EHR adoption and HIE implementation go hand-in-hand to support the meaningful use of technology, and to achieve high quality and efficient health care.

We believe that statewide coordination of HIE implementation in North Dakota is vital to facilitate state participation in nationwide health information exchange. These efforts will greatly benefit health care providers, patients and payers by improving patient safety and quality of care, reducing medical errors and duplicative services, lowering overall costs of health care, and improving continuity of care. We recognize that this effort is essential to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records so North Dakota can meet the federal goal to make all health records electronic by 2014. We are committed to ongoing participation in the implementation of a statewide HIE.



We look forward to continued coordination and implementation of the HIT REC and HIE efforts in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. P. Lundblad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jennifer P. Lundblad, PhD, MBA  
President and CEO, Stratis Health &  
Principal, Key Health Alliance  
952-854-3306  
[jlundblad@stratishealth.org](mailto:jlundblad@stratishealth.org)

*Physicians Dedicated to the Health of North Dakota*



**NORTH DAKOTA  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION**

1622 East Interstate Avenue  
Post Office Box 1198  
Bismarck, North Dakota  
58502-1198

(701) 223-9475  
Fax (701) 223-9476  
[www.ndmed.org](http://www.ndmed.org)

**Kimberly T. Krohn, MD**  
Minot  
President

**A. Michael Booth, MD**  
Bismarck  
Vice President  
Council Chair

**Steven P. Strinden, MD**  
Fargo  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Debra A Geier, MD**  
Jamestown  
Speaker of the House

**Robert A. Thompson, MD**  
Immediate Past President

**Gaylord J. Kavlie, MD**  
Bismarck  
AMA Delegate

**Robert W. Beattie, MD**  
Grand Forks  
AMA Alternate Delegate

---

**Bruce Levi**  
Executive Director &  
General Counsel

**Leann Tschider**  
Director of Membership  
Office Manager

**Annette Weigel**  
Administrative Assistant

---

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, MD, MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

On behalf of the North Dakota Medical Association (NDMA), we express our strong support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan submitted to your office. NDMA believes statewide coordination of HIE implementation in North Dakota is critically important in order to facilitate state participation in nationwide health information exchange.

NDMA is the professional membership organization for North Dakota physicians, residents and medical students. Our Association participated in the development of the North Dakota plan as supported fully by our House of Delegates which adopted a resolution in September 2009 to participate fully in our state efforts to develop a state health information technology plan and leverage state and federal resources to support HIPAA-compliant, connected and interoperable health information technology systems.

North Dakota physicians recognize that electronic health records and other forms of health information technology have the potential to transform the delivery of health care services, and have emerged as a critical component of health system reform as a tool to improve health care quality, prevent medical errors, reduce health care costs, increase administrative efficiencies, decrease paperwork, and expand access to more affordable care. Statewide, our health care systems and facilities have already invested substantially in health information technology.

NDMA will continue to educate its members on the benefits of HIE and electronic health records and we look forward to working with our North Dakota Health Information Technology Office to ensure that physicians in North Dakota can achieve meaningful use and obtain federal incentive payments.

The statewide nature of this initiative and support of the ND Legislative Assembly and Governor's office, and our collaborative approach and commitment to broad-based stakeholder involvement, constitutes an effective strategy for a public-private sector partnership toward implementing a statewide HIE for North Dakota. We are confident in our ability to implement our plan well, and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Krohn, MD

Bruce Levi



September 26, 2010

David Blumenthal, MD  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

I am writing this letter in support of the North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic Operational Plan.

As the CMS-designated Quality Improvement Organization for North Dakota, it is our mission to improve the quality of health care for the people of our state. We understand the important role health information exchange will have on accelerating the pace of quality improvement in North Dakota. It is particularly critical that rural states such as North Dakota develop this capability. Transfers between rural providers and tertiary centers, and transitions among settings put patients at significant risk for duplication of services, medication reconciliation errors, and delayed access to critical information.

As a member of the North Dakota HIT Advisory Committee, I had the opportunity to be integrally involved in the development of this plan. I know that it was developed with significant involvement and input from key professional and consumer stakeholders, and that it has the broad support of these organizations.

I encourage your approval and support for this plan.

Sincerely,

Barbara Groutt  
Chief Executive Officer



**St. Alexius Medical Center**  
**PrimeCare**

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, MD, MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

On behalf of St. Alexius Medical Center and the patients and families we serve, I write to express strong support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan to establish a statewide HIE in North Dakota. It is our belief that statewide coordination of HIE implementation in North Dakota is vitally important in order to facilitate state participation in nationwide health information exchange.

These efforts will be of great value to businesses and individual residents of North Dakota by improving health care quality and outcomes. In addition, this plan is a critical step in ensuring that we reduce medical errors and duplicative services, improve patient safety and care coordination, and control the overall costs of health care.

Implementation of HIE will also drive innovation in the health care marketplace and be an important source of new jobs in the health care sector. The multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach that North Dakota will embark upon will generate market opportunities for health information technology.

We recognize that this effort is essential to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records so that North Dakota can meet the federal goal to make all health records electronic by 2014. In FY 2010/2011 St. Alexius will implement much of the software necessary to complete an electronic medical record system including documentation and computerized physician order entry (CPOE). Our system has the hooks necessary to be HIE compatible. To that end, we are committed to ongoing participation in the implementation of a statewide HIE.

The statewide nature of this initiative, and its collaborative approach and commitment to broad-based stakeholder involvement, constitutes an excellent strategy for ensuring that public and private interests can efficiently partner to develop and implement the statewide HIE.

Please do not hesitate to contact Todd Bortke, Information Systems Director at 701-530-8005 or [tbortke@primecare.org](mailto:tbortke@primecare.org) with any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andy Wilson  
President/CEO

Pw

*"Let all be received as Christ."*

900 East Broadway • PO Box 5510 • Bismarck, ND 58506-5510  
Tel. 701.530.7000 • Fax 701.530.8984 • TDD 701.530.5555 • [www.st.alexius.org](http://www.st.alexius.org)

# Wishek Community Hospital & Clinics

1007 - 4th Ave. South  
P.O. Box 647  
Wishek, North Dakota 58495

(701) 452-2326  
FAX (701) 452-2392

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

We are pleased to support the following Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan for North Dakota. North Dakota is ready to take the next steps in the process of implementing a statewide HIE, paving the way for nationwide exchange and developing the tools we need to transform health care.

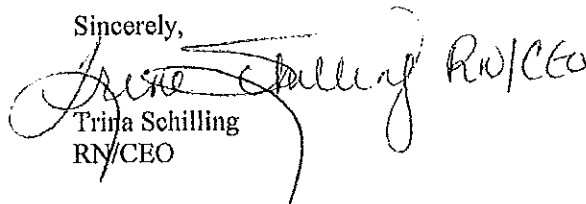
These efforts will be of great value to patients, consumers, health care providers, and businesses by improving health care quality and outcomes. This plan is a critical step in ensuring that we reduce medical errors and duplicative services, improve patient safety and care coordination, and control overall cost of health care.

North Dakota's HIE Strategic and Operational Plan details how our state will develop the health information technology architecture necessary to exchange electronic health records, deliver vital information to providers at the point of care and empower patients to be more involved in their health care decisions. The Plan represents thousands of hours stakeholder involvement from organizations and individuals across our state who understand the tremendous potential of health information technology and have dedicated their time and energy to implementing it. North Dakota has made significant progress in paving the way for Medicare and Medicaid providers and hospital to participate in the federal electronic health records payment incentive program and believes that this initiative will be an enormous financial and quality benefit to our health system.

We recognize that this effort is essential to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records so that North Dakota can meet the federal goal to make all health records electronic by 2014. To that end, we are committed to ongoing participation in the implementation of a statewide HIE. The statewide nature of this initiative, and its collaborative approach and commitment to broad-based stakeholder involvement, constitutes an excellent strategy for ensuring that public and private interests can efficiently partner to develop and implement the statewide HIE.

We appreciate the opportunity to support the State in its efforts with the Exchange.

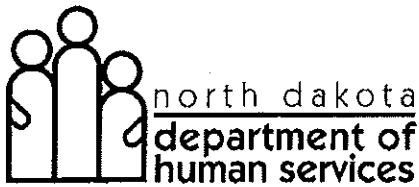
Sincerely,

  
Trina Schilling  
RN/CEO

---

Clinics In:

Wishek • Napoleon • Kulm • Zeeland • Lehr • Gackle • Streeter • Fredonia



**Medical Services**  
(701) 328-2321  
Toll Free 1-800-755-2604  
Fax (701) 328-1544  
ND Relay TTY 1-800-366-6888  
Provider Relations (701) 328-4030

John Hoeven, Governor  
Carol K. Olson, Executive Director

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

---

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

I am writing this letter in support of the North Dakota's Health Information Exchange (HIE) strategic and operational plan for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This funding is imperative in the development of a Health Information Exchange for use statewide.

North Dakota's strategic and operational plan specifically addresses a realistic approach that will encourage continuity of care (improving it in the process), decreased errors, improved medication management, reduce duplication of effort and create a more thorough approach to health care.

As the Medicaid Program Integrity Administrator, I am particularly interested in the manner in which the strategic and operational plan addressed program integrity at various levels. I am certain that the plan will help us combat health care fraud, waste and abuse in North Dakota by providing us with a more "transparent" approach to managing the health and well being of our citizens.

Again, I would like to express my support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange strategic and operational plan. If you require additional information, I may be reached at [dmock@nd.gov](mailto:dmock@nd.gov) or 701-328-1895.

Sincerely

Dawn Mock  
ND Medicaid Program Integrity Administrator

CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES ROOM 4909  
501 NORTH COLUMBIA ROAD, STOP 9037  
GRAND FORKS, ND 58202-9037  
PHONE: (701) 777-3848   FAX (701) 777-6779  
<http://ruralhealth.und.edu>

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Dr. Blumenthal:

With pride and confidence, I write this letter of support for the submission of the ND HIE Strategic and Operational Plans. The Center for Rural Health serves as a focal point for rural health in North Dakota. As the federally designated State Office of Rural Health (SORH) for the state, the Center connects the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the university to rural communities and their health institutions to facilitate the development and maintenance of rural health delivery systems. In this capacity the Center works both at a national level and at state and community levels.

Since 2006, the Center has been instrumental in coordinating the statewide work on HIT/HIE by convening a wide variety of rural and urban stakeholders, to create the HIT Steering Committee and workgroups; establish the HIT website, and coordinate conferences and communication. In 2009, as a result of successful state legislation, the HIT Steering Committee transitioned to the ND Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC), established the first state HIT Office and hired our first \ HIT Director, Sheldon Wolf.

I currently serve as Vice-Chair of HITAC and know first-hand that we have worked tirelessly to inform and engage countless stakeholders, both rural and urban, in order to gain their perspective and feedback in developing an HIE plan that will optimize care coordination, improve quality, efficiencies and patient safety which will ultimately positively impact health outcomes of all North Dakotans. We have also made certain that our efforts are in coordination with the Regional Extension Assistance Center for HIT (REACH) and Lake Region State College, which is part of the Community College Consortia, all geared to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records and the ability to exchange health information across the continuum of care.

North Dakota has a longstanding reputation of leveraging resources and working collaboratively and our efforts on HIE are no different. We are well aware that ONC approval of our plans is merely a stepping stone in our continued work to fine tune the electronic sharing of health information which meets state and federal standards and guidelines. We look forward to your feedback and ultimate approval of these plans.

Sincerely,



Lynette Dickson, MS, LRD  
Program Director, Center for Rural Health/Vice-Chair ND HIT Advisory Committee

THE NATION'S LEADER  
IN RURAL HEALTH





ALTRU CLINIC - MAIN

P.O. Box 6003

Grand Forks, ND

58206-6003

(701) 780-6000 *phone*

*altru.org web*

September 27, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic & Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

On behalf of Altru Health System, I am writing to express support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan to establish statewide HIE in North Dakota.

First and foremost, the greatest benefits of a statewide HIE are those which serve to benefit the quality of care rendered to those we serve. Among these benefits will be improved communication between caregivers, as patients access services throughout our state and beyond. Importantly, we feel that errors in medical care will be reduced greatly and, as a result, care will be safer and less expensive. For instance, management of medications for many of our patients is extremely complex and potentially dangerous. Having the ability to reconcile medications through the continuum of care will eliminate many of the gaps and conflicting medication plans we currently experience in the care process. Also, there will be fewer occasions on which tests or images are duplicated, because caregivers are unaware or unable to acquire those carried out in other settings.

An additional benefit of HIE will be increased efficiency in handling both medical and healthcare financial transactions. We believe this will remove a great cost burden to today's health delivery system.

Finally, improved HIE connections will allow simpler processes to study best practices and audit the efficacy of services.

HERE FOR LIFE



David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
September 27, 2010  
Page 2

Mr. Blumenthal, we're very proud that all stakeholders in North Dakota have come together in an open process to develop a collaborative HIE strategic and operational plan. We believe this has resulted in a plan that will be broadly adopted and scaled to the needs of our state. All major stakeholders have agreed to proportionate financial participation in the project and are committed to achieving its results.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David R. Molmen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David R. Molmen, MPH  
Chief Executive Officer  
Altru Health System



60  
*Years of Caring*  
1950 - 2010

# WEST RIVER HEALTH SERVICES

September 27, 2010

Sheldon Wolf  
ND H.I.T Director  
600 East Boulevard Ave. Dept. #112  
Bismarek, North Dakota 58505-0100

Dear Sheldon:

On behalf of West River Health Services, a small rural healthcare system serving southwest North Dakota and northwest South Dakota, I am writing to express strong support for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange (HIE) Strategic and Operational Plan to establish statewide HIE. It is our belief that statewide coordination of HIE implementation is vitally important in order to facilitate state participation in nationwide health information exchange.

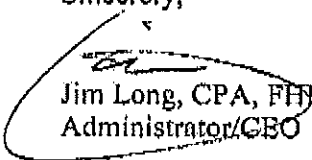
These efforts will be of great value to businesses and individual residents by improving health care quality and outcomes. In addition, this plan is a critical step in ensuring that we reduce medical errors and duplicative services, improve patient safety and care coordination, and control the overall cost of health care.

Implementation of HIE will also drive innovation in the health care marketplace and be an important source of new jobs in the health care sector. The multi-stakeholder and multi-sector approach that North Dakota has embarked upon will generate market opportunities for health information technology.

We recognize that this effort is essential to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records so that North Dakota can meet the federal goal to make all health records electronic by 2014. To that end, we are committed to ongoing participation in the implementation of a statewide HIE.

The statewide nature of this initiative, and its collaborative approach and commitment to broad-based stakeholder involvement, constitutes an excellent strategy for ensuring that public and private interests can efficiently partner to develop and implement the statewide HIE.

Sincerely,



Jim Long, CPA, FFHMA  
Administrator/CBO

1000 HIGHWAY 12 — HETTINGER, ND 58639-7530 — 701 567-4561 — [www.wrhs.com](http://www.wrhs.com)

OUR MISSION: TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF THE REGION.

# Bismarck Public Health

September 24, 2010

David Blumenthal, M.D. MPP  
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

RE: North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan

Dear Mr. Blumenthal:

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH) is a local public health provider in central North Dakota for one of the largest population centers in the state. BBPH supports North Dakota Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan.

BBPH administration intends to implement an electronic health information system (EHIS) and supports the need to have a statewide exchange and operational plan. BBPH has been present at several planning meetings and appreciate the collaborative approach used during the development process of the HIE plan. Public health, in general, has responsibility to ensure prevention services are part of care for individuals and the HIE would allow prevention to improve quality of care and reduce duplication. In addition, BBPH provides nurse assessment, referral and treatment for many community residents – young families, elderly, and individuals without payment sources. Quick, accurate communication with other providers is seen to be essential to our agency for the below reasons:

- Continuity of care
- Improved quality of care
- Decreased errors
- Reconciliation of medications
- Reduce duplicate procedures and tests
- Lower Costs
- Increased Efficiencies

As BBPH pursues implementation of EHIS, the guidelines and processes found in the ND HIE plan will allow us to make a cost effective decision that will best serve our customers and ensure professional communication between public and private providers.

Sincerely,



Paula Flanders, RN  
Director  
Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health

